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NSC BRIEFING

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CEYLON

- I. Parliamentary elections last Saturday resulted in substantial victory for moderate elements.
  - A. Of 151 seats, relatively conservative United National Party (UNP) won 50, and moderate-socialist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) won 46.
  - B. The three leftist parties received distinct set-back, winning total of only 23 seats. (In previous parliament of only 100 members, they had 22 seats.)
  - C. Other seats divided widely; outgoing premier Dahanayake's LPP party suffered badly and Dahanayake himself was not re-elected.
- II. Nevertheless, problem of political instability remains as neither UNP or SLFP controls a majority and both seem reluctant to form a coalition.
- III. UNP leader Dudley Senanayake has been sworn in as head of a minority government.
  - A. The 48-year-old Senanayake is highly respected, but lacks forcefulness and in 1953 resigned premiership because of nervous strain.
  - B. As prime minister, Senanayake can
    1. attempt to rule with a minority--in constant danger of being toppled by the opposition; or
    2. attempt a coalition with, or try to obtain a firm guarantee of support from, the SLFP.

But since UNP and SLFP are established rivals despite their essentially similar political outlook, unsure what arrangement can be developed.

  - D. Although Parliament's apparent unwillingness to precipitate new elections immediately will probably enable UNP to rule for a time, new elections may become necessary in 1962 or very near future.

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